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**OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS**

WELLINGTON

## BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

fulcrum for an appraisal of the racial and political enigmas of India. As a result of his affair and his sympathies with the "browns," Peter finds himself ostracised by the "pink" Europeans, while his motives are suspect by the natives. Although unable to fight these ingrained prejudices, the couple persist in their affair. But the national uprising against the Portuguese involves Sohini, and enmeshes them both in the ensuing riots. The tragic denouement is all the more poignant because of the author's economy of treatment.

Two American agents, Ruth Bogart and Jack Rhyce, in *Stopover: Tokyo*,

are assigned to Japan to eliminate unidentified Communist agitators. They do this in the guise of "Do-gooders" making a survey of the work of the Asian Friendship League there. Ruth and Jack besides having to contend with ruthless "reds," discover unprofessional-like emotions creeping into their relationship. The two conflicts, emotional and professional, make their task doubly hard, but with the aid of Mr Moto the assignment is successfully concluded, though not without sacrifice.

Interesting, but unconvincing, is Mr Lloyd's study of the morals of an Australian Army Captain, John Grant, sent with an infantry company to rescue, from a Japanese fate worse than death, a group of stranded women at a Mission in New Guinea. That such a brave soldier should murder a missionary in cold blood for no reason other than that he has nursed a phobia about religion from boyhood days, and should then evade justice, makes one wonder at the *raison d'être* of such a novel. Equally mystifying is the purpose of all the school-girlish tittle-tattle in Kay Cicellis's *Ten Seconds From Now*, which is a hotch-potch of seemingly inconsequential love affairs amongst the staff of a Greek broadcasting station.

—Richard Hutchings

### HORROR'S HEYDAY

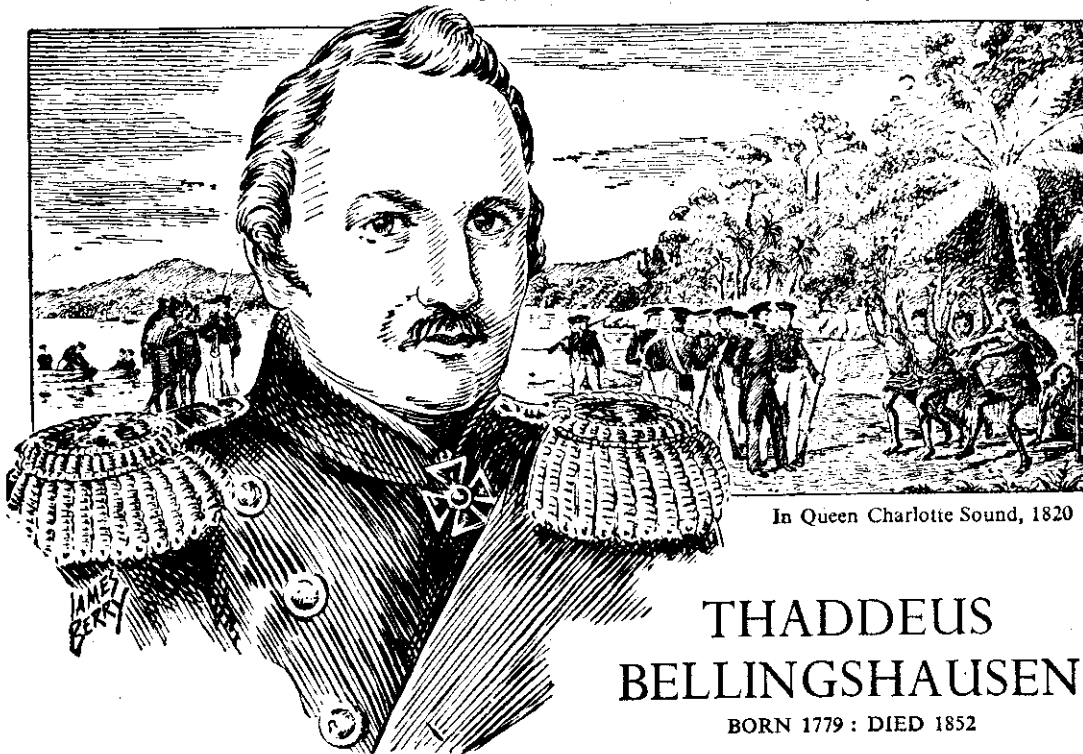
*GOTHIC FLAME*, by Devendra P. Varma; Arthur Barker, English price 30/-.

THE Gothic novel has never received enough deference from critics is the contention of this Indian scholar, who here publishes a detailed study of its origins, its grisly heyday and its decline into such modern derivations as *Dracula*, Rider Haggard and the green-back Penguin. Dr Varma shows that the impulse which produced the Gothic novel existed before Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* appeared in 1764; the beginnings of this literary form, which flourished for about 70 years, were coincident with the revived interest in Elizabethan dramatists (Webster, Middleton, Tourneur) who loved violent themes. Perhaps the most important thing about *The Castle of Otranto* (a dull work to yours truly) is that it threw aside the main 18th century tradition and "substituted invention for observation." But Walpole's book was a symptom, rather than the prime cause, of the release of energy which marked the Great Thaw of the romantics.

Dr Varma has a wide-ranging mind and suggests (but does not follow up) the psychological implications of the grotesque procession of ghosts, ghouls, mad monks, persecuted maidens, ogreous barons, and natural or supernatural monsters which populate the pages of the Gothic novel. He himself is a monster of erudition, at times too benevolent a one when he quotes with reverence from obscure contributors to *Modern Language Notes* and similar journals. Very occasionally his use of English is slightly off the beam: "... the diffident waters were channelled into Gothic serials, tales, fragments, and shockers, but the first great distributary was the Gothic drama whose current," etc. But his lively mind makes up for minor faults, and he is particularly skilful and effective in his choice of quotations. This is a valuable piece of literary history, but it is a critical work only in so far as it chronicles the judgments of others.

—David Hall

Great Names in New Zealand History — No. 4 of a series



In Queen Charlotte Sound, 1820

## THADDEUS BELLINGSHAUSEN

BORN 1779 : DIED 1852

Captain Bellingshausen was the commander of a well-conducted Russian voyage of exploration to the Pacific and Antarctic Oceans in 1819-1821. In 1803 at the age of 25 he sailed around the world under the Russian Commander Krusenstern, who had trained in the British Navy. Both Bellingshausen and Krusenstern were admirers of Captain Cook, and the voyage of Bellingshausen was planned to explore areas generally not covered by Cook. His voyage is notable for the first discovery of land within the Antarctic Circle and for his charting of the Tuamotu Archipelago, in eastern Polynesia, and other areas till then unknown.

Most interesting to New Zealanders is his visit to Queen Charlotte Sound in May and June 1820, where his relations with the Maoris were friendly. His account of the country and

the native life is careful and probably the best since Captain Cook's time.

His charting was so accurate that much of it was accepted for the next hundred years or more. Like Captain Cook, he took the greatest care of his crews and lost none from sickness. A good account of his voyage was first published in English in 1945, whence the illustration above is derived.

*The Bank of New South Wales, which today provides banking facilities at over 1,000 points in New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Papua and New Guinea, was the first bank in this whole vast area. It is therefore fitting that it should pay tribute to Thaddeus Bellingshausen and to all those whose names and deeds are part of the tradition of which New Zealanders are justly proud.*

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